

CREUSA,

Queen of ATHENS.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL in *Drury-Lane*,

By His MAJESTY's Servants.

WRITTEN BY

Mr. WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

Secretary of the Hon. Order, &c

D U B L I N:

Printed for SARAH COTTER,
AND
RICHARD WATTS, in *Skinner-row*

M,DCC,LXII.



EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Miss HAUGHTON,

Who acted the PYTHIA.

*At length I'm freed from tragical parade,
No more a pythian priestess,—tho' a maid;
At once resigning, with my sacred dwelling,
My wreaths, my wand, my arts of fortune-telling.*

*Yet superstitious folks, no doubt, are here,
Who still regard me with a kind of fear,
Lest to their secret thoughts these prying eyes
Should boldly pass, and take them by surprise.
Nay, tho' I disavow the whole deceit,
And fairly own my science all a cheat,
Should I declare, in spite of ears and eyes,
The beaux were handsome, or the critics wise,
They'd all believe it, and with dear delight
Say to themselves at least,
"The girl has taste;" "the woman's in the right;"*

*Or, should I tell the ladies, so dispos'd,
They'd get good matches, ere the season clos'd,
They'd smile, perhaps, with seeming discontent,
And, sneering, wonder what the creature meant;
But whisper to their friends, with beating heart.
"Suppose there should be something in her Art"
Grave statesmen too would chuckle, should I say,
On such a motion, and by such a day,
They would be summon'd from their own affairs
To tend the nations more important cares;
"Well if I must—howe'er I dread the load,
"I'll undergo it," for my country's good.
All men are bubbles, in a skilful hand,
The ruling passion is the conjurer's wand.
Whether we praise, foretell, persuade, advise,
'Tis that alone confirms us fools or wise:
The devil without may spread the tempting sin,
But the sure conqueror is—the devil within.*

A SECOND
EPILOGUE,

Spoken by MRS. PRITCHARD.

*STAR, Ladies,—Tho' I'm almost tir'd to Death
With this long Part—and am so out of Breath—
Yet such a lucky Thought kind Heaven has sent,
That if I Die for't, I must give it Vent.*

*The Men you know are gone. And now, suppose,
Before our Lords and Masters are recross'd,
We take, th' Advantage of an empty Town,
And chuse a House of Commons of our own.
What think ye, cannot we make Laws?—and then
Cannot we too unmake them, like the Men?
O place us once in good St. Stephen's Pews,
We'll shew them Women have their publick Use.
Imprimis they shall marry; not a Man
Past twenty-five, but what shall wear the Chain.
Next, we'll in earnest set about Reclaiming,
For, by my Life and Soul, we'll put down Gaming,
We'll spoil their deep destructive Midnight Play;
The Laws we make, we'll force them to obey;
Unless we let them, when their Spirits flag,
Piddle with us, ye know, at Quinze and Brag.
“I hope, my Dearest,” Says some well-bred Spouse,
“When such a Bill shall come before your House
“That you'll consider Men are Men—at least
“That you'll not speak, my Dear.”—Not speak?—
The Beast!
What would you wound my Honour?—Wrongs like these—
For this, Sir, I shall bring you on your Knees.
—Or, if we're quite good-natur'd, tell the Man
We'll do him all the Service that we can.*

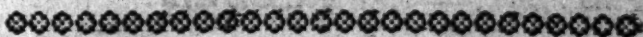
*Then for ourselves, what Projects, what Designs?
We'll tax, and double tax their nasty Wines;*

But

PROLOGUE.

*But Duty free Import our Blonds and Laces,
French Hoops, French Silks, French Cambricks and ---
French Faces.*

*In short, my Scheme is not compleated quite,
But I may tell you more another Night.
So come again, come all, and let us raise
Such glorious Trophies to our Country's Praise,
That all true Britons shall with one Consent
Cry out, " Long live the Female Parliament !"*



PROLOGUE

Spoken by Mr. Ross.

PROLOGUES of old, the learn'd in language say,
*Were merely introductions to the play,
Spoken by Gods, or Ghosts, or Men who knew,
What'er was previous to the scenes in view.
And complaisantly came to lay before ye,
The several heads, and windings of the story.*

*But modern times and British rules are such
Our bards beforehand must not tell too much.
Nor dare we like the neighb'ring French admit,
Ev'n confidants who might instruct the pit.
By asking questions of the leading few,
And hearing secrets which before they knew.*

*Yet what we can to help this antique piece,
We will attempt—Our scene to night is Greece.
And by the magic of the poet's rod,
This stage the temple of the delphic God!
Where kings and chiefs and sages came of old,
Like modern fools, to have their fortunes told.
And monarchs were enthron'd or nations freed
At an old priest, or wither'd maid decreed.*

PROLOGUE.

*Yet think not all were equally deceiv'd,
Some knew, more doubted, many more believ'd.
In short these oracles and witching rhymes,
Were but the pious frauds of ancient times.
Wise contriv'd to keep mankind in awe,
When faith was wonder, and religion law.*

*Thus much promised to every feeling breast,
We leave the stones themselves to tell the rest.
— Yet something sure was to the critics said
Which I forget, — Some invocation made !*

*Ye critic bands like jealous guardians, plac'd
To watch th' encroachment on the realms of taste.
From you our author would two honors obtain
Not wholly diffident, nor wholly vain ;
Two things he asks ; 'tis modest sure from you,
Who can do all things, to request but two.
First to his scenes a kind attention pay
Then judge, — with candor judge — and we obey.*



Advertisement.

THE subject of the following Scenes is so ancient, so slightly mentioned by Historians, and so fabulously treated by *Euripides* in his Tragedy of *Ion*, that the Author thought himself at liberty to make the Story his own. Some glaring Circumstances he was obliged to adhere to, which he has endeavoured to render probable.

Persons Represented,

XUTHUS, King of *Athens*

Mr. *Berry*.

LYSSUS, an unknown Youth, Attendant on the Temple at *Delphi*,

} Miss *Macklin*.

ALERTES, a *Grecian* Sage,

Mr. *Garrick*.

PHORBAS, an old *Athenian*,

Mr. *Mossop*.

Priests of *Apollo*.

Citizens of *Athens*.

CREUSA, Queen of *Athens*,

Mrs. *Fritchard*.

PYTHIA, Priestess of *Apollo*,

Miss *Haughton*.

LYCRA, and other women attending on the Queen,

} Mrs. *Cowper*, &c.

Virgins belonging to the Temple.

Guards, &c.

SCENE, the Vestibule of the Temple of *Apollo*, at *Delphi*, and the Laurel Grove adjoining.



C R E U S A,
 QUEEN of ATHENS.
 A T R A G E D Y.

A C T. I.

The Vestibule of the Temple. ILYSSUS, and Virgins.

ILYSSUS.

HA S T E, haste, ye Virgins, round the Co-
 lumns twine
 Your flowery Chaplets, and with Streams
 fresh-drawn

Of Castaly, bedew the sacred Porch
 Of the great God of Day. Already see
 His orient Beam has reach'd the double Top
 Of high Parnassus, and begins to shed
 A gleamy Lustre o'er the Laurel Grove:
 Haste, haste, ye Virgins. From the Vale beneath
 I hear the Noise of Chariots, and of Steeds
 Which hither bend their Course, for every Sound
 Seems nearer than the former. — And behold
 A reverend Stranger, who perhaps proclaims
 Th' Approach of some great Monarch, to consult
 All-seeing Phœbus or implore his Aid.
 Haste, haste, ye Virgins!

Enter PHORBAS.

Phorbas. Tell me, gentle Maids,
 And thou, fair Youth, who seem'st to lead the Train,
 Is this the Temple of the Delphic God?

Ilyssus. It is; and on the middle Point of Earth
 Its firm Foundations by immortal Hands,

Stand

Stand fix'd:—but break we off; the folded Gates
Unbar, and lo! the Priestess' self appears.

[*The Pythia speaks as she descends from the Temple.*

Pyth. Hence, you profane! nor with unhallow'd
Pollute the Threshold of the Delian King [Step
Who slew the Python!—say, from whence thou art,
And what thy Business, Stranger.

Pbor. Sacred Maid!

From *Athens* am I come, the Harbinger
Of great *Creusa*, mine and *Athens'* Queen.

Pyth. Comes she on pious purpose, to adore
The mystic Shrine oracular?

Pbor. She does;

And with her comes the Partner of her Bed,
Æolian Xuthus: he whose powerful Arm
Sav'd *Athens* from her Fate, and in Return
From good *Erechtheus'* bounteous Hand receiv'd
His Daughter and his Crown.—Would he had found
Some other Recompence! [*Half aside.*

Pythia.

[*Overhearing him.*

Would he had found?

Old Age is talkative, and I may learn [they?
Somewhat of Moment from him.—Wherefore come
Does Famine threaten, or wide-wasting Plague
Infect the Land?

Pbor. Thank Heaven, our crouded Streets
Have felt no dire Disease; and Plenty still
Laughs in our blooming Fields. Alas! I fear
The childless Goddess who presides o'er *Athens*
Has found a surer Method to declare
How ill she brooks that any stranger Hand
Should wield th' *Athenian* Scepter.

Pyth. Does from her the Vengeance come?

Pbor. I know not whence it comes,

But this I know, full fifteen Years have roll'd
Since first their Hands were join'd, and roll'd in vain;
For still the Royal Pair in Silence mourn,
Curs'd with a barren Bed. For this they come,
To explore the latent Cause, and beg of Heav'n
To grant an Heir, or teach them where to fix,
On what selected Head, th' *Athenian* Crown.

Pyth.

Pyth. And heaven no doubt will hear and grant
their Prayer.

Ilyffus, haste and bid the Priests prepare
For Sacrifice. You, *Nysa*, and your Sisters,
Amid the Laurel Grove with Speed perform
The Morning's due Lustration.

Then hither all return—Myself mean while
Will tempt the Vice of Age and try to draw } *Aside.*
Some useful Secrets from him.

The good King

Of whom you speak, *Erechtheus*, did his People
Esteem and love him as they ought; for Fame
Talk'd largely of his Worth. He was a King.

Pbo. He was my good old master, such a King—
As heaven but rarely sends. Did we esteem
And love him, dost thou ask? O, we ador'd him,
He was our Father, not our King.—These Tears
Atleast may speak my Heart.—We must not hope
In these degenerate Times to see him equal'd.

He never did an unkind act but once,
And then he thought the public Good requir'd it
Tho' much I fear the Evils we lament
From thence derive their Origin.

Pyth. What Act? What unkind Act?

Pbor. O Maid, 'twere long to tell
The whole unhappy Story, yet in part

Hear what to me appears too closely join'd,
With these our present Ills. There was a Youth
Athenian born but not of Royal Blood,
His Name *Nicander*; him unlucky Fate
Had made the Lover of our present Queen

While yet a Maid. What will not Love attempt
In young ambitious Minds? he told his Pain,
And won the Fair in secret to admit,

And to return his Passion. The good King
Was for a Time deceiv'd, but found at last

Th' audacious Fraud, and drove the guilty Youth
To Banishment perpetual. Some say

'Twas by his Means he fell, tho' that my Heart
Consent not to believe. Thus much is sure,

Nicander wander'd forth a wretched Exile,

And

And ere few Days had past, upon the Road
Were found his well-known Garments stain'd with Blood,
Sure Sign of Murder, and as sure a Sign
No needy Robber was the Instrument.

Pyth. How bore *Cressa* this?

Pbor. At first her Sorrows

Were loud and frantic. Time at length subdued
Her rage to silent Grief. The good old King
To sooth her woes, consented she should raise
A Tomb to her *Nicanor*, and perform
A Kind of annual Rites to parted Love.

Pyth. But that not long continued, for we find
She married *Xuthus*.

Pbor. 'Twas a Match of State.

He sav'd her Country, and she gave her Hand
Because that country ask'd it. But her Heart
Is buried with *Nicanor*. Still to him,
And *Xuthus* self permits it, she performs
Her yearly Off'rings and adorns with Flowers
An empty Tomb.—Would he had liv'd, and reign'd,
Her wedded Lord! we had not wanted then
Th' Assistance of a Stranger's Arm to guard
Th' Athenian State, nor had we then been driven,
To search for Heirs at *Dalphi*.

Pyth. Stop thy Tongue,
Or speak with Reverence of the sacred Shrine.

—The Words were hasty, but thy Silence now
Makes just Atonement for them.—Then perhaps
Thou think'st this want of Heirs a Curse entail'd
By Heaven on *Athena* for *Nicanor's* Death
And *Xuthus'* Reign.

Pbor. I am *Athenian* born,
Nor *Eolian* Kings, however great
And good they may be.

Pyth. The Imperial *Xuthus*,
Is much renown'd.

Pbor. Is virtuous, brave, and pious;
Perhaps too pious.

Pyth. How!

Pbor. Forgive me, Maid,
I speak my Thoughts with Freedom.

Pyth.

Pyth. What thou speaks't
To me, is sacred. Then perchance thou rank'st
His Journey hither to address the God
Among those Acts which thou would'st call too pious?

Phor. For me the Gods of *Athens* would suffice.—
Yet do I pay just Rev'rence, holy Maid,
To thee, and to thy Shrine.

Pyth. Thy Zeal for *Athens*
Is too intemperate—But the Train returns
And interrupts our Converse. Say, *Ilyssus*, are they

Enter ILYSSUS and Virgins. [prepar'd?

Ilyssus. They are, and only wait
Th' approaching Victims.

Pyth. By yon Train, the Queen
Is now on her Arrival. Thou, *Ilyssus*,
Receive her here; while I, as Custom wills,
Deep in the Temple's inmost Gloom retire
And wait th' inspiring God—*Ilyssus*, hear,
When thou hast paid due Honours to the Queen,
Haste to *Aletes*, in the Laurel Grove
Impatient I expect him; tell him, Youth,
Things of uncommon import do demand
His instant Presence.—But the Croud approaches.
Stranger, farewell,—I feel, I feel within
An Heav'n-born Impulse, and the Seeds of Truth
Are lab'ring in my Breast.—Stranger, farewell.

The Pythia returns to the Temple, and the Gates shut.

Enter CREUSA and Attendants.

Cre. No farther need we conduct. Bid the Guards
Return, and wait the King.

Phor. Does aught of Moment
Detain him on the Road?

Cre. He stops a while
At great *Trophonius'* Cave, that he may leave
No Duty unperform'd, Heaven grant his Zeal
May meet with just Success!

Ilyf. Please you, great Queen,
In yon Pavillion to repose, and taste
Some light Refection.

Creu. Ha!—*Lycea*,—*Phorbas*,
What Youth is this? There's something in his Eyes,

His Shape, his Voice.—What may we call thee, Youth?

Ilyf. The Servant of the God, who guards this Fane.

Cre. Bear'st thou no Name?

Ilyf. *Ilyssa*, gracious Queen.

The Priests and Virgins call me.

Cre. Ha! *Ilyssa*!

That Name's *Athenian*. Tell me, gentle Youth,

Art thou of *Athens* then?

Ilyf. I have no Country.

Nor know I whence I am.

Cre. Who were thy Parents?

Thy Father, Mother?

Ilyf. Ever honour'd Queen,

I never knew a Mother's tender Care,

Nor heard th' Instructions of a Father's Tongue.

Cre. How cam'st thou hither?

Ilyf. Eighteen years are past. [sant.

Since in the Temple's Portal I was found, a sleeping In-

Cre. Eighteen Years! good Heaven!

That fatal Time recalls a Scene of Woe—

Let me not think—Were there no Marks to shew

From whom or whence thou wert?

Ilyf. I have been told

An osier Basket, such as Shepherds weave,

And a few scatter'd Leaves were all the Bed

And Cradle I could boast.

Cre. Unhappy Child!

But more, O ten times more unhappy they

Who lost perhaps in thee their only Offspring!

What Pangs, what Anguish must the Mother feel,

Compell'd, no doubt, by some disastrous Fate—

But this is all Conjecture.—

Ilyf. O great Queen,

Had those from whom I sprung been form'd like thee,

Had they e'er felt the secret Pangs of Nature,

They had not left me to the desert World

So totally expos'd: I rather fear

I am the Child of Lowliness and Vice,

And happy only in my Ignorance.

—Why should she weep? O if her Tears can fall

For even a Stranger's but suspected Woe,

How is that People blest where she presides

As Mother, and as Queen!—Please you, retire.

Cre. No, stay, thy Sentiments at least bespeak
A gen'rous Education. Tell me, Youth,
How has thy mind been form'd?

Ilyf. In that, great Queen,
I never wanted Parents, the good Priests
And pious Priestesses, who with Care sustain'd
My helpless Infancy, left not my Youth
Without Instruction. But O, more than all,
The kindest, best good Man, a neighb'ring Sage
Who has known better Days, tho' now retir'd
To a small Cottage on the Mountain's Brow,
He deals his Blessing to the simple Swains
In Balms and powerful Herbs. He taught me Things
Which my Soul treasures as its dearest Wealth,
And will remember ever. The good Priests,
'Tis true, had taught the same, but not with half
That Force and Energy; Conviction's self
Dwelt on *Aletes'* Tongue.

Cre. *Aletes*, said'st thou?
Was that the good Man's Name?

Ilyf. It is, great Queen,
For yet he lives, and guides me by his Councils.

Cre. What did he teach thee?

Ilyf. To adore high Heaven,
And venerate on Earth Heaven's Image Truth:
To feel for others' Woes, and bear my own
With manly Resignation—Yet I own
Some Things he taught me which but ill agree
With my Condition here.

Cre. What things were those?

Ilyf. They were for Exercise and to confirm
My growing Strength. And yet *Kosten* told him
The Exercise he taught resembled, much
What I had heard of War. He was himself
A Warrior once.

Creu. And did those Sports delight thee?

Ilyf. Great Queen, I do confess my Soul mix'd with
them,

Whene'er I grasp'd the Oser-platted Shield,
Or sent the mimic *Javelin* to its Mark,

I felt I know not what of Manhood in me,
But then I knew my Duty and repress'd
The swelling Ardor. 'Tis to Shades, I cried,
The Servant of the Temple must confine
His less ambitious, not less virtuous Cares.

Creu. Did the good Man observe, and blame thy
Ardor?

Ilyf. He only smil'd at my too forward Zeal;
Nay seem'd to think such Sports were necessary
To soften what he call'd more rigorous Studies.

Creu.—Suppose when I return to *Athen*, Youth,
Thou should'st attend me thither! would'st thou trust
To me thy future Fortunes?

Ilyf. O most gladly!
—But then to leave these Shades where I was nurs'd
The Servant of the God, how might that seem?
And good *Aletes* too the kind old Man
Of whom I speak?—But wherefore talk I thus,
You only throw these tempting Lures to try
Th' ambition of my Youth.—Please you retire.

Creu. *Ilyffus*, we will find a Time to speak
More largely on this Subject, for the present
Let all withdraw and leave us. Youth, farewell,
I see the Place, and will retire at leisure.

Lycea, *Phorbas*, stay.

Ilyf. How my Heart beats! [*Aside.*
She must mean something sure. Tho' good *Aletes*
Has told my polish'd Courts abound in Falshood,
But I will bear the Priestess' Message to him—
And open all my Doubts. [*Exit.*

Phor. Great Queen, why stand'st thou silent? some-
thing seems
To labour in thy Breast.

Creu. Alas! good *Phorbas*,
Didst thou observe that Youth? when first my Eye
Glanc'd on his beauteous Form, methought I saw
The Person of *Nicander*.

Phor. Gracious Queen,
Your Heart misleads your Eyes. The Image there
Too deeply fix'd makes every pleasing Object
Bear some Resemblance to itself.

Creu.

Queen of A T H E N S.

Creu. Lycia,

And yet, tho' thou wast there I well believe
Thy Youth can scarce remember how he look'd,
When from the Fight triumphant he return'd
Grac'd with the Victor Laurel; such a Wreath
As now *Ilyssus* wears: Indeed, *Lycia*,
Thy Mother, had she liv'd had thought as I do.
Nay when he spake the Voice too was *Nicander's*.
I know not what to think, perhaps 'twas Fancy,
Perhaps 'twas something more.

Phor. Illustrious Queen,

You do abuse your noble Mind, and lend
To mere Illusions of the Brain, the Force
And Power to make you wretched. Grant there were
Some slight Resemblance of *Nicander's* Form.
In young *Ilyssus*, tho' my Eyes perceive not
Even the most distant Likeness, grant there were,
Yet wheresore should the Sight so nearly touch thee,
Casual similitude, we know too well

Nicander left no Heir. [*She seems disturb'd.*]
I say not this,
Great Queen, to heighten but relieve your Sorrows
And banish from your Breast each vain Surmise
Which Fancy might suggest.

Creu. Too well indeed,

O *Phorbas*, much too well indeed we know
Nicander left no Heir to his Perfections,
No Image of himself.—And yet, good *Phorbas*,
Blame not my Folly, nor demand a Reason:
If I intreat thee to examine strictly
The Fortune of this young Unknown. The Priests
Or Priests may know more than they entrust
To his unwary Youth. The Sage he spake of,
Couldst thou not search him out; 'tis somewhere near
He dwells, I think, upon the Mountain's Brow.
Thou wonder'st at me, call it if thou please
A Woman's Weakness; but obey me, *Phorbas*.

*Phor. You say I wonder, 'tis indeed to see
My honour'd Queen employ her Thoughts thus idly
On Grievs long past; when things of dear Concern
To her and Athens should alarm her nearly.*

Creu. What Things of near Concern?

Pbor. See'st thou not, Queen,
Thy Crown, *Erechtheus'* Crown, the Crown of *Athens*,
Wav'ring in Fortune's Power?

Creu. The Gods will fix it.

Pbor. The Gods? Ah, great *Creusa*, may my
Fears

Be vain and groundless; but I fear the Gods
Have left us to ourselves. When we resign'd
Th' *Athenian* Scepter to a Stranger Hand
We did reject their Guidance. Wherefore come we
To *Delphi* now, but that th' offended Gods
Have turn'd too long an inattentive Ear
To our ill-judged Petitions.

Creu. Why ill-judg'd?

We ask'd for Heirs.

Pbor. We did; for *Xuthus* Heirs,
The Race of *Aeolus*.—I know, great Queen,
They were to spring from thee; but Heaven permits,
not

The native Purenese of th' *Athenian* Soil
Should mix with foreign Clay. I wish we find not
More *Alien* Kings at *Delphi*.

Creu. Think'st thou *Xuthus*

Deceives us then? His Worth, his Piety,
Forbid the Thought. Besides, the sacred Place
Admits not of Deceit.

Pbor. Credulity

Is not the Vice of Age. Forgive me, Queen,
If I suspect the Piety which brings us
To search for Kings at *Delphi*. Might not *Athens*
Have chosen her own Monarch? her brave Youth,
Her bearded Sages, are they not the Flower
And Pride of *Greece*? Nay might'st not thou, *Creusa*,
With liberal Hand bestow th' Imperial Wreath?
And who has better Right?

Creu. The Gods who gave it
To me, and my great Ancestors.

Pbor. Whate'er

The Gods bestow can never be resum'd,
Tho' we repent. The pious Populace

Will

Queen of ATHENS.

11

Will rev'rence Kings from Heaven.

Creu. And wherefore not?

Pbor. O Queen, perhaps my Fears are too officious,
But let thy Servant beg——

Creu. I know thy Zeal
For me, and for thy Country. Rest assur'd,
Creusa never will consent to aught
Which can endanger *Athens*.

Pbor. My Heart thanks thee!

Creu. Mean while the Youth *Hyffus*——

Pbor. Should the King
Confirm'd by Oracles presume to fix

A Stranger on the Throne,——

Creu. He will not do it.

Pbor. I hope he will not, yet——

Creu. The Youth I speak of,
Wilt thou enquire?——

Pbor. Should *Xuthus* lay aside
His usual Mildness, and assume at once
The Monarch and the Husband, could'st thou then——

Creu. In *Athens*' Cause I could resist them all,
But cease these vain Suspicions. A few Hours
Will prove thy Fears were groundless. Mean while,

Pborbas
Thou wilt find Methods to inform thyself
Touching this unknown Youth.

Pbor. By yonder Guards
The King should be at Hand.

Creu. I will retire
To the Pavilion and expect him there.
Yet hear me, *Phorbas*; let not *Xuthus* know
Why thou enquir'st.

Pbor. *Xuthus* has other Cares.

Creu. The Priestess too, I would confer with her.
Tho' that *Lycea* may perform. Farewel,
And prosper in the Task.——Alas, *Lycea*.

[Exit. *Phorbas*.]

There is a Secret labours in my Breast,
But Fate forbids that I should give it Utterance.
This boding Heart was early taught to feel
Too sensibly; each distant Doubt alarms it.

It starts at Shadows. — But retire we, Maid,
Grief is th' unhappy Charter of our Sex;
The Gods who gave us tender Tears to shed,
Gave us more cause to shed them. [Exeunt.]

ACT II. The Laurel Grove.

Altes and Ilysus.

Altes.

SEEM'D she disturb'd when she beheld thee?
Ily. Much.

And when I gave her the Night Birds I knew
Relating to my Fortunes, she dissolv'd
In silent Tears: such soft Humanity
Sure never dwelt in any Breast but hers,
Nor did I think till now that I had Cause
Of Discontent; but since she wept my Fate,
I seem to find a Reason in her Grief,
And feel myself unhappy.

Al. Why unhappy?

Ily. I know not why; and yet to be confin'd
Thus to a single Spot, to draw in Air,
To take in Nourishment, to live, to die
For this was Man design'd? Ah good *Altes*,
Sure thou hast taught me, Godlike Man was made
For nobler Purposes of general Good;
For Action, not for Rest: — The Queen propos'd
I should attend her to the *Abertan* Shore;
Would'st thou advise it? dost thou think, *Altes*,
She meant I should attend her?

Al. Doubtless, Youth,

If she propos'd, she meant in.

Ily. And would'st thou
Advise I should attend her?

Al. Wherefore not?

Ily. May I desert these Shades? or can I leave
Thee, thee, my good *Altes*?

Al. O *Ilysus*,

Strive

Strive not to hide thy Heart; from me thou can'st not;
I form'd it, and I know it, *Delphi's Shades*
Have now no Peace for thee, thy Bosom feels
Ambition's active, unrelenting Fires.
Thou wishest, and thou hop'st, thou know'st not what.
'Tis Glory thou would'st have: Go then, brave
Youth,

Where Virtue calls thee: be the Means but noble
Thou can'st not soar too high.

Ily. My more than Father!

Thy Words inspire me, and I feel a Warmth
Unknown before.—But then, my Birth——

Alc. Thy Birth?

Did I not early teach thee to despise
A casual Good? Thou art thyself, *Ilyssus*.
Inform me, Youth, would'st thou be what thou art,
Thus fair, thus brave, thus sensibly alive
To Glory's finest Feel; or give up all,
To be descended from a Line of Kings,
The Tenth perhaps from *Jove*?—I see thy Cheek
Glow's a repentant Blush.—Our greatest Heroes,
Those Gods on Earth, those Friends of human Kind,
Whose great Examples I would set before thee,
Were once unknown like thee. And yet, if Birth
Concern thee, know, prophetic is my Speech,
Thy Fate is now at work, and a few Hours
May show thee what thou art.—My Words alarm
thee.

Ily. They do indeed. O tell me——

Alc. 'Tis in vain

Thou would'st enquire from me, what Heaven con-
ceals

Till its fit Time. Didst thou not say, *Ilyssus*,

The *Pythia* would be here?

Ily. She comes.

Alc. Retire

And leave us to ourselves.

Ily. I will.—And yet

Might I not know——

Alc. From me thou can'st know nothing.

Ily. A few Hours, said you?

Alc.

Alc. Hence, and beg of Heaven
To prosper the Event. Retire and leave us.

[*Exit Ilyssus.*]

Enter Pythia.

Pyth. Now, good *Melus*, if thy pregnant Mind,
Deep judging of Events, has ever fram'd
Such artful Truths as won believing Man,
To think them born of Heaven, and made my Name
Renown'd in Greece, O now exert thy Power.
No common Cause demands it. Kings and States
Are our Solicitors, and *Athen's* Fate
Hangs on my Lips.

Alc. I know it well. And now
If, as thou say'st, my secret kind Advice,
And worn Experience in the Ways of Men,
Have gain'd thy Altars Credit, and with Gifts
Loaded thy Shrines, now, by one grateful Act
Thou may'st repay me all.

Pyth. What Act? O speak
And gladly I obey.

Alc. An Act, my *Pythia*,
Which tho' at first it may seem bold and dangerous,
Shall in the End add Lustre to thy Shades
And make ev'n Kings Protectors of thy Fane.

— O *Pythia*, 'twas the Hand of Heaven itself
Which brought these Royal Suppliants to thy Shrine.
I could unfold a Tale.—But let it rest.
Thou shalt ere Night know all, and bless with me
Th' indulgent Powers above. Only in this
Obey me blindly, *Pythia*.

Pyth. Say in what.

Alc. Declare *Ilyssus* Heir to *Athen's* Crown.

Pyth. *Ilyssus* Heir? what mean'st thou? 'tis a Fraud
Too palpable.

Alc. I knew 'twould startle thee.
But 'tis because thou know'st the Fraud, my *Pythia*,
That it alarms thee. Didst thou really think
This Youth were Heir to the *Atreian* Crown,
Would'st thou not seize the happy Gift of Chance
And to the World proclaim it?

Pyth. True, I should,

And

And bless my Fate that in these sacred Shades
I had nurs'd up unknowingly a King
For my Protector. But what then might seem
The Consequence, now seems the Cause, *Alc.*
Will they not say I made the King, to gain
The kind Protector?

Alc. So to thee it seems;

But who will say it? the believing many
Will bow with Reverence and implicit Faith
To what thy Shrine ordains, and for the few
Who may suspect the Cheat, true Policy
Will keep them silent: Should they dare detect
A Fraud like this, and spurn at Right divine,
Where were their Powers? The many-headed Beast
Would scold the Hacken'd Rein, and from his Back
Shake off the lordly Rider. Nay, should *Athena*
Be blind to her own Good, the States of *Greece*,
Thou know'st it well, would arm in thy Defence,
And force her to receive the King thou gav'st her.
His Form, his unknown Birth, his winning Softness,
His Education here in Heaven's own Eye,
All plead in his Behalf; and, as he tells me,
The Queen already with unusual Marks
Of Favour has beheld him. For the King,
A pious Awe and Reverence for the Gods
Is his distinguish'd Attribute. Thou seem'st
To weigh my Words: To clear thy Doubts at once,
Know many Days have past since first I knew
Of their Approach: Thou think'st I should have told
It needed not. I have myself prepar'd [thee,
Each previous Circumstance, and found due Means
To forward the Event. Thy Part is easy;
Behold the Oracle.

Pythia reads.

"A basish'd Youth is *Athena's* Cause of Woe."
How know'st thou that? [Looking earnestly at him.

Alc. Demand not, but read on.

Pythia reads.

"For that Youth basish'd, *Athena* must receive

"Another Youth, and on the young unknown

"Who tends my Shrine, and whom I call my Son,

"Bestow

"Bestow th' Imperial Wreath." The God declares
No more.

Alc. Thou seem'st amaz'd.

Pyth. I am indeed,

To find thee thus instructed on a Theme
I came prepar'd to mention. The Queen's Passion,
Her Lover banish'd—

Alc. What thou see'st I know
May tell thee I know more. But say from whence
Thou gainest thy Intelligence?

Pyth. From one
Whose Zeal may thwart thy Schemes: a warm old
And firm in *Athen's* Cause, who came to-day [Man,
Before the rest, and led by my Inquiries
Gave me those Hints on which I thought to build
Prophetic, doubtful Answers. But I find
My best Instructor here.

Alc. Perhaps thou do'st.
Of this rest well assur'd, I ne'er had ask'd
Of *Pythia* aught but what I knew with Safety
She might comply with.

Pyth. Tell me what thou know'st.

Alc. Not yet; 'tis better thou remain in Ignorance
Till all be finish'd. But pronounce the Oracle,
And leave the rest to me. Dost thou distrust me?

Pyth. I do not—Yet if on slight Hints alone
Thou form'st this weighty Fraud, consider well
What may or may not follow.—By thy Looks
There should be something hid.—Thy coming
hither

Was much upon the Time we found this Child.
And since, with what almost paternal Care
Thou hast instructed him, Tho' that indeed
Might spring from thy Benevolence of Heart,
Which I have known is boundless. Say, *Alc.*,
What should I think? Thou smil'st.

Alc. Wilt thou obey me?

Pyth. I must; and yet if 'tis a Fraud, *Alc.*,
The warm old Man of whom I speak detests
A Stranger King. Ev'n *Xuthus* self, whose Worth

He

He doth acknowledge great, he views with Pain
Upon th' *Athenian* Throne.

Alc. I know him well;

'Tis *Phorbas*. Do not wonder at my Words,
But find a Means that I may see the Queen
In secret, unobserv'd by prying Eyes,
And all that old Man's Fears, and Rage shall vanish.
He shall with Joy receive a Stranger King.
Wilt thou devise the Means?

Pyth. I now begin
To hope indeed. There is some Secret hid
Of most important Weight. But does the Queen—

Alc. I will not answer thee; my Time's too pre-
Only advise some Means that I may see her (scious;
Quite unobserv'd by all.

Pyth. You cannot see her
Till all be past. Will that suffice?

Alc. It will.

Pyth. Here in the Laurel Grove.

Alc. No Place more fit
But O be careful, *Pythia*, that the King
Observe us not; for 'tis of mighty Moment
He should believe this substituted Youth
Of Race *Aolian*. To which End, my *Pythia*,
I have among the Priests these few Days past,
When they suspected not th' Approach of *Xuthus*,
Dropp'd doubtful Hints as if I had discover'd
Some antique Marks amid the Olive Twigs
Which form'd *Ilyssus*' Cradle, that denote
He sprang from *Aeolus*; and at the Cave
Of great *Trophonius* have I ta'en due Care
Such Answers should be given as would induce
One of less Faith than *Xuthus* to expect
An Heir of his own Family.

Pyth. The Boy,
Knows he of thy Intentions?

Alc. No, nor must
Till ripening Time permit. His Fate depends
Upon his Ignorance.—Soft, who comes here?

Pyth. It is the warm old Man, and, as I think,
Some fair Attendant of the Queen. Retire.

I would know more, but—Wherefore do'st thou gaze
So ardently upon them?

Ale. Hence, away,
We must not now be seen.

[*Exeunt Pythia and Aletes.*]

Enter Lycia and Phorbas.

Lyc. This Place seems quite retir'd. Here if thou
wait

I will inform the Queen, and her Impatience
Will bring on the Instant. Surely *Phorbas*,
Something mysterious lurks beneath her Tears;
Her strange Anxieties. Since thou wer't absent
This unknown Youth alone has fill'd her Thoughts,
Of him alone she talks, recounts his Words,
Describes his Looks, his Gestures, loves to dwell
On each Particular. Ere thou wer't gone
She wish'd, and even expected thy Return;
Dispatch'd me often, tho' she knew 'twas vain,
To watch for thy Arrival. When the King
Approach'd, she smooth'd her Brow, as if to hide
The Strugglings of her Mind; nay seem'd afraid
He should suspect her Sorrows.

Phor. Then to him
She mention'd not this Youth?

Lyc. Her Conduct there
Was most mysterious. With a Voice of Fear,
She slightly dropp'd that she had seen a Youth
Whom she could wish to hear with her to *Athens*.
The King consented, and with a Smile propos'd
They should adopt him.

Phor. Had adopt him, say'st thou?

Lyc. In sport he spake, but at his Words a Glow
Of sudden Joy spread o'er her Face, her Tongue
Forgot Restraint, and in his Praise grew lavish:
Then stopp'd again, and hesitating strove
To check its Zeal, as fearful to betray
Some hidden Transport.

Phor. Whatsoe'er it be,
I soon shall damp her Joy. This Youth, *Lycia*,
Must not to *Athens*.—But behold, the Queen.

Lyc. O how impatient; ere I could return
To tell her thou wer't here, she comes herself,

Eager to learn thy Tidings.

Enter CREUSA.

Cre. Now, my *Phorbass*,
Say what thou know'st at once. The King already
Consents he should attend us.

Phor. Never, never
Shall *Athens* see that Youth.

Cre. What mean'st thou, *Phorbas*?

Phor. Too much already of *Aeolian* Blood
Has hapless *Athens* known.

Cre. *Aeolian* Blood!

Phor. The King consents! I doubt not his Consent:
—Yes 'twas my Word, great Queen, *Aeolian* Blood;
This Youth descends from *Aeolus*.

Cre. Be dumb,
Or bring me better Tidings.

Phor. Worse I cannot,
But what I speak is Truth.

Cre. Peace, Monster, Peace!
Thou know'st not Truth. 'Tis thy affected Zeal
For *Athens*, for thy Country, that suggests
This horrid Falshood; 'tis thy Hate of *Xuthus*.

Phor. What means my Queen? or how have I de-
serv'd

Such harsh Expressions? does my honest Love
For *Athens*, and *Creusa*, subject me
To such unkind Suspicions?

Cre. Gracious Gods!
It cannot be. — Alas, forgive me, *Phorbas*,
I know not what I say, thy Words strike thro' me,
They pierce my very Soul. O I had hop'd—
But tell me all, tho' I believe thee honest,
Thy Zeal for *Athens*, and for me, may make thee
Too hasty of Belief. Why art thou silent?

Phor. Amazement stops my Tongue, these Starts of
Passion,
This Violence of Grief, must have a Cause.

Cre. Perhaps they have, perhaps to thee, good

Phorbas,
This bursting Heart may open all its Sorrows;
But tell me first, what are thy Proofs? from whence

Gain'dst thou this curs'd Intelligence?

Phor. O Queen,

Thy looks, thy Words—I know not how to answer.

Yet if there be Offence in what I speak,

My Ignorance offends, not I offend.

Know then, *Creusa*, from the Priests who 'tend

This *Delphic* Shrine, by your Command I learnt

My first Intelligence.

Cre. And did they say

This Youth was of *Aolian* Race?

Phor. They did,

At least their Words imported little less.

They judg'd me *Xuthus* Friend, not Enemy,

As would thy Rage suggest, and as a Friend

Drop'd Hints they thought would please me.

Cre. Then, perhaps,

It was not Truth they spake, they but deceiv'd

Thy Ear with well-judg'd Flattery.

Phor. What follow'd

Confirm'd it Truth. Has the King mentioned to thee

What Promises were given him at the Shrine

Of sage *Trophenus*?

Cre. General Promises

Of sure Success, no more.

Phor. Know then, great Queen,

As I return'd from Converse with the Priests,

I met his Friend and Bosom Fav'rite *Lycon*,

Joy sparkled in his Eyes, and his vain Tongue

O'erflow'd with Transport. I observ'd it well,

And gave the Torrent Passage, nay with Art

Ev'n led it blindly forward. Till at length

He open'd his whole Soul, and under Seal

Of firmest Secrecy, told me the King

Would find an Heir at *Delphi*, such an Heir

As would rejoice the unapparent Shades

Of his great Ancestors. At that I startled,

He found his Error then, and told me, glozing,

That great *Trophenus* had almost proclaim'd,

Tho' not expressly, *Xuthus* here should find

An Heir of his own Race.

Cre. Of his own Race?

Phor.

Pbor. So said he; whether great *Troponius* spake
This Oracle, I know not; but I know
Too well whose Oracle to me declar'd it.

Cre. Think'st thou this Youth—

Pbor. Grant it were only done
To try my Zeal, why should they try it now,
Unless some close Design requir'd that Trial?
Yes, mighty Queen, I do believe this Youth
Is our intended King. But, by yon Heaven,
If it be he, or any other He
Of *Xuthus*' Race, he shall not reign in *Athens*.
This Poinard first shall drink his Blood.

Cre. Forbear!
That Thought distracts me.—Tho' perhaps 'tis just.
—O *Phorbas*, 'twas my Hope, my Wish, my Prayer
That Youth might reign in *Athens*. But thy Words
Strike deadly Damps like baleful Aconite,
And poison all within.

Pbor. What means my Queen?

Cre. O *Phorbas*, O *Lycea*—but first swear
By *Nemesis* and the tremendous Powers
Who punish broken Faith, no Word, no Hint
Shall 'scape your Lips of all your Queen declares.

Both. We swear!

Cre. Know then, O Pain to Memory!
I had a Son.

Pbor. A Son!

Lyc. Good Heaven!

Pbor. A Son!

Cre. O my full Heart! thy Mother, my *Lycea*,
Knew all the fatal Process of my Woes,
And was their only Solace. *Phorbas*, yes,
I had a Son, but witness every God
Whose genial Power presides o'er nuptial Leagues,
Nicander was my wedded Lord. That Night,
That fatal Night which drove him forth from *Athens*,
Forc'd from my swelling Womb, ere yet mature,
Its precious Burthen. To thy Mother's Cares
I ow'd my Life. In secret she asswag'd
My piercing Pangs, and to *Nicander's* Arms
In secret she convey'd the wretched Infant.

What follow'd well thou know'st *Nicander* fell,
 And with him doubtless fell the dear, dear Charge
 Consign'd to his Protection. Yet good, *Phorbas*,
 When I beheld this Youth, his Looks, his Voice,
 His Age, his unknown Birth, all, all conspir'd
 To cheat me into Hopes. Alas, how fallen
 How blasted all!

Phor. Great Queen, my Tears confess,
 An old Man's Tears, which rarely fall, confess
 How much I share your Anguish. Had I known
Nicander was your Lord, by Earth and Heaven,
 I would have rais'd all *Athens* in his Cause;
 Nay, been a Rebel to the best of Masters,
 Ere the dear Pledge of your unsport'd Loves
 Should thus have fallen untimely. Now, alas,
 I have not ev'n one flattering Hope to give thee.
 Till now I oft have wonder'd why so far
 Their Rage pursued *Nicander*. 'Tis too plain,
 They knew the precious *Barthen* which he bore,
 And for the hapless Child the Father died.

Cre. O God! I feel the Truth of what thou utterest,
 And my Heart dies within me. O *Lycia*,
 Who, who would be a Mother!

Phor. Be a Queen,
 And turn thy Grief to Rage. Shall Aliens sport
 With thy Misfortune? Shall insulting Spoilers
 Smile o'er the Ruins of thy hapless State,
 While all the golden Harvest is their own?
 Shall *Xuthus* triumph? Shall his Race succeed?
 While thine, I mean not to provoke thy Tears.
 Thy tender Blossoms are torn rudely off
 Almost or ere they bloom.

Cre. It shall not be,
 No, ye immortal Powers!—Yet let us wait
 Till the dire Truth glare on us. One short Hour
 And Doubts shall be no more. Then *Phorbas*, then
 Should he presume to place on *Athens'* Throne
 His alien Race, nay tho' this beauteous Youth,
 This dear Resemblance of my murder'd Lord,
 Should be the fatal Choice, by that dear Shade,
 Which perish'd as it reach'd the Gates of Life,

I will,

I will, I think I will, assist thy Vengeance.
—Soft, who comes here? 'Tis he! how innocent!
How winning soft he looks! Whate'er it be,
He knows not the Deceit. Look on him, *Phorbas*;
Nay, thou shalt question him.

Pho. Not I, great Queen,
Resume yourself nor let this fond Persuasion
Betray you to a Weakness you should blush at.

Cre. If possible I will.

Enter Ilyssus.

Ilyf. Illustrious Queen,
The Altar stands prepar'd, and all Things wait
Your Royal Presence: From the King I come,
His Messenger.

Cre. We will attend his Pleasure.
Be near me, *Phorbas*, I may want thy Counsel.

Ilyf. She looks not on me sure as she was wont,
I'll speak to her. Permit me, gracious Queen,
To pay my humblest Thanks, for by your Means
The King is kind as you are.

Cre. Rise, *Ilyssus*,
Perhaps you needed there no Advocate,
Phorbas, lead on. My Resolution melts;
And all my Sex returns. One Look from him
Outweighs a thousand Proofs. *Phorbas* lead on
Or I am lost in Weakness.

[Exeunt Creusa and Phorbas.]

Ilyssus stopping *Lycea*.

Gentle Maid, stay yet a Moment. Wherefore does the Queen
Look coldly on me? Know'st thou, if in aught
I have offended?

Lyc. Things of mightiest Import
At present fill her Mind, nor leave they Room
For leis affairs. My Duty calls me hence. *[Exit.]*

Ilyf. I hope it is no more; yet each Appearance
Alarms me now. Alas! thou hast rais'd
Such Conflicts here, such Hopes, such Fears, such
Doubts,

That Apprehension sinks beneath their Weight.
Well might'st thou say these Solitary Shades

Have

Have no Peace for me. Yet once thou taught'st me,
That the pure Mind was its own Source of Peace,
But that Philosophy I find belongs
To private Life for where Ambition enters
I feel it is not true. [Exit.]

ACT. III. *The Vestibule of the Temple.*

ALBES alone.

WHY should I doubt? it will, it must succeed,
Yet I could wish that I had seen *Creusa*
Before 'twas undertaken, for perhaps—
'Tis better as it is. Her Part had then
Been difficult to act; now what she does,
Assisting or opposing the Design,
Will all seem natural.—The Pythia sure
Will act as I directed.—Hark, the Rites
Should be ere this perform'd; why stay they then?
——That Noise proclaims them finish'd and the
Croud

Will soon be here.—They come, I must not yet
Be seen; the Pythia in the Laurel Grove
May tell me what has pass'd. [Exit.
Creusa descends hastily from the Temple in great Disorder,
Lycea following.

Lyc. Stay, mighty Queen,
You know not what you do; your Rage transports you;
You leave the Rights unfinish'd, and the Croud
In wild amazement gaze on your Departure.

Cre. I will not stay, nor will I tamely bear
My disappointed Hopes. O honest *Phorbas*,
O good old Man, thy penetrating Mind
Saw early their Designs. 'Tis to supply
Nicander's Loss (O ne'er to be supply'd)
That we must call in Stranger's to the Throne,
And yield our Sceptres to *Æolian* Hands.
—Yes, ye great Shades of my Progenitors,
I hear ye call, ye shall, ye shall have Vengeance!

Lyc. Whatever you design, conceal at least
This Transport of your Rage.

Cre.

Cre. Why loiters *Phorbas*?
 He saw my Anguish, wherefore comes he not
 To its Relief? They fool me past Endurance.
 Rely they on the Weakness of my Sex?
Lycea, they shall find this feeble Arm
 In such a Cause can lay the Distaff by,
 And grasp th' unerring Thunderbolts of *Jove*.
O Phorbas, art thou come?

Enter Phorbas from the Temple.

Pho. Now, mighty Queen,
 Are my Suspicions just? Is *Phorbas* honest?

Cre. As light as Truth itself. My Counsellor,
 My Bosom Friend!

Pho. Now shall a casual Likeness
 If such there be, a semblant Cast of Features,
 The Sport of Nature in a human Form,
 Shall Trifles light as these weigh down Conviction?
O Queen, from first to last th' apparent Scheme
 Glares on us now. Why were we brought, to *Delfi*,
 But that this Youth has long been nurtur'd here
 In secret from the World; perhaps the Son
 Of *Xuthus* self, plac'd here at first to hide
 The Guilt and Shame of some dishonest Mother,
 Tho' now applied to more pernicious Ends.

Cre. It may be so.

Pho. And why, say why, to-day,
 While *Xuthus* stays behind for Oracles
 He wanted not, is young *Iffus* bid
 To meet your Eyes, and win with artful Tales
 Your easy Heart?

Cre. Bid! was he bid to do it?

Pho. I saw the Priestess whisper something to him,
 Then loud she bade him wait for thy Approach.
 She must, forsooth, retire to sacred Gloom,
 And wait for Inspiration. *Xuthus'* Gold
 Was what inspir'd the Traitors. Yet, good Heaven,
 When from the Shrine she gave the fraudulent Words,
 With what strange Art the holy Hypocrite
 In mimic Trances died!—"A banish'd Youth
 "Is *Athen's* Cause of Woe." Too truly said,
 Tho' for a wicked Purpose, to allure

Thy

Thy easy Faith, and lead thee to admit
The Fraud which follow'd.

Cre. Never, Never, *Pborbas*,

Will I that Fraud admit. How readily
Did *Xuthus*, when my foolish Fondness ask'd it,
Consent to my Request! * Thou heard'st him say

[* To *Lycea*.

We should adopt this Youth; in seeming Sport
He spake it but ev'n then th' insulting Tyrant
Couch'd fatal Truths beneath th' ambiguous Phrase.

Pbor. Why should a Youth design'd for Solitude
Be taught the Arts of War? He saw himself
The Impropiety. Who is this Sage
That has instructed him; and why should *Lycon*
O'erflow with sudden Joy, but that he found,
From thy apparent Fondness for the Boy,
Their Schemes grew practicable. Nay, to-day,
When to the Priestess' self my honest Love
For *Athens*, and Dislike of stranger Kings,
Burst freely forth, she chid my hasty Zeal,
Commended *Xuthus*, talk'd of Piety
And Rev'rence to the Gods: 'Twas to their Priests
She meant their meddling Priests, who dare presume
To sport with Thrones, to sell their Gods for Gold;
And stamp rank Falshoods with the Seal of Heaven.

Lyc. Forbear, you are too loud so near the Temple;
Xuthus himself will hear.

Cre. We would be heard
Instruct me, *Pborbas*, by what Means to crush
This impious Combination.

Pbor. *Athens* yet
Has honest Hearts. Yes, *Pborbas* yet has Friends
Who dare be Patriots, and prefer their Country
To *Xuthus*' kindest Smile. Some such are here
Ev'n now at *Delphi*. But, illustrious Queen,
We must with Caution act. The Name of Heaven,
How'er usurp'd, adds Vigour to their Cause,
And weakens ours. We might in secret find
A sure Revenge.

Cre. What?

Pbor. Death,

Cre.

Cre. Of Xuthus?

Phor. His Might follow, but the more immediate Cause
Should earliest be remov'd, the Boy.

Cre. The Boy! Why should he die? Believe me, honest *Phorbas*,
He knows not of the Fraud. His every Look
Proclaims his innocence. If impious Men
Make him their Instrument of evil Deeds,
Can he be blam'd? Bred up in Shades, poor Youth,
He never knew the Arts of base Mankind,
Nor should he share their Punishment.

Phor. O Queen,
They have too well succeeded. This fond Passion
Which their insidious Cunning first inspir'd,
Clings close about your Heart, and may at last
Undo us all. — But hark, that Noise declares
The finish'd Rites. Retire we to the Grove,
And there will I enforce —

Creu. No, let us stay.
I will confront this artful Politician,
And shew him I am yet a Queen.

Phor. Perhaps
'Twere better to retire till our full Scheme
Were ripe for Vengeance — Yet if we
remain
High Words must rise, which will } [* *Aside.*
alarm her Pride
And fit her for my Purpose.

Enter Xuthus, Ilyssus, Priests, Virgins, Guards, &c.
From the Temple.

Xuthus, (coming to *Creusa*)
Thy Looks, *Creusa*, thy abrupt Departure
Affronting to the God himself, and these
His sacred Ministers, too plainly shew
Irreverent Rage, resisting Heav'n's high Will.
Nor dost thou want I see, unthinking Woman,
Inflamers of thy Folly. — But of this
Enough; behold the Youth whom Heaven designs
Thy Heir, and mine.

Creu. My Heir!

Xuth.

Xuth. Thy Heir, *Creusa*.

What means that haughty Look? Why with Contempt

Dost thou behold him? Is he chang'd, *Creusa*,
Have a few Hours so totally transform'd him?
Is all that winning Grace of which thou spok'st
Almost with Rapture, is that native Charm
Of Innocence all vanish'd? Hear him speak;
Hear if he talks less sensibly than when
Thy pleas'd Attention hung upon his Words,
And lent each Syllable an added Grace,
What hast thou found, or thy grave Monitor,
What has he found, which can so suddenly
Have wrought this wond'rous Change? Is it because
The Gods have thought with thee that he deserves
A Crown? or is it that my Will consents?
And therefore thine, proud Queen, perversely strives
To combat thy Affections?

Creu. We, methinks,

Have chang'd Affections. The calm, steady *Xuthus*,
Whose equal Mind ne'er knew the stormy Gusts
Of discomposing Passion, now can feel
Indecent Warmth, when touch'd by pious Zeal.
Nay he, to whom the tend'rer Sentiments
Seem'd but the Weakness of the human Frame,
Now wakes inspir'd with some unusual Softness.
Have Oracles the Power to raise at once
The kind Affections? or did he conceal
The smother'd Flame till authoriz'd by Heaven
It might burst out unquestion'd?

Xuth. Haughty Queen,

I understand thee well; thou think'st this Youth
A Substitute of mine, and dar'st affront
Yon awful Shrine, the Fountain of pure Truth.
But by that God, who bears the vengeful Bow,
And whose large Eye—Yet wherefore should I strive
By Oaths to undeceive thee; Breasts like mine
Can scorn th' imputed Falshood they detest,
Nor am I now to learn from what vile Source
Thy vain Suspensions rise. But know, proud Queen,
This Youth shall reign in *Athens*; and yet more

To

To punish thy vain Pride, since thou provok'st it,
I do believe him of *Aolian Race*.

Creu. Thou do'st?

Xuth. I do, a Race as glorious, Queen,
As *Cecrops*' boasted Lineage. For the Youth,
Were I to beg the choicest Boon of Heaven
From my own Loins to rise, I could not hope
A nobler Offspring.

Phor.

[*Aside to Creusa.*

Hear'st thou that?

Cre. I do,

And will revenge the Insult.

Ilys.

[*Kneeling.*

Gracious Queen!

What have I done which should estrange thee to me?

Am I th' unhappy Cause of these Dissentions?

Cre. Kneel not to me, *Ilyssus*.

Xuth. Kneel not to her;

'Tis I am thy Protector, and thy Friend,
Nay now thy Father.

Ilys. Yet, O mighty King,

Permit me at her Royal Feet to pay

My humble Duty. If I call thee Father,

She sure must be a Mother.

[*She turns away disorder'd.*

Xuth. Rise, *Ilyssus*,

Thou seest she stands unmov'd.

Ilys. No, now she softens,

I see it in her Eyes.

Cre. I will, I will

Be Mistress of my Soul.—Why kneel'st thou, Youth,
I blame not thee.

Xuth. Me then thou blam'st, *Creusa*.

I am the Object of thy Rage. 'Tis *Xuthus*

Thou think'st unworthy of the Athenian Throne.

Cre. *Athens* might well have spar'd a foreign Lustre,
Secure of Fame, had *Xuthus* ne'er been born.

Xuth. Ungrateful Queen, had *Xuthus* ne'er been born
What now had *Athens* been?

Cre. Perhaps in Ruins,

And better so than to become the Prey

Of needy wandering Strangers.

Xuth. Earth and Heaven!

This the Return?—I knew thou never lov'd'st me,
Yet witness, Heav'n, I ravish'd not thy Hand,
Thou gav'st it sullenly, but yet thou gav'st it;
And I well hop'd thy Female Sense of Honour,
Of Duty to thy Lord, might have secur'd
At least my future Peace. Thy tender Thoughts,
The Wife's best Ornament, I knew were buried
In a Plebeian Grave.

Cre. Plebeian Grave?

Xuth. Fool that I was, I flatter'd thy vain Sorrows,
Indulg'd their weak Excess, and rais'd, I find,
Imaginary Rivals in the Tomb.
But never more, *Creusa*, never more
Shalt thou affront my ill-requited Fondness.
I will destroy that Pageant of thy Passion,
Tear from that Idol Shrine th'insulting Wreaths,
And cancel thy mock Worship.

Ily. Gracious Queen,
Retire a while.

Cre. Begone.—Insulting Tyrant.

Touch but a Wreath that's sacred to *Nicander*,
And by pale Hecate's awful Rites I swear
Thy Life shall pay the Forfeit; nay the Lives
Of thy whole dastard Race.—Plebeian Grave!
Had that Plebeian liv'd, Imperial *Xuthus*
Had crouch'd beneath his Feet.

Xuth. O would Heaven

This scepter'd Arm could raise him from the Earth,
That thou might'st see how infamous a Slave
Thou dar'd prefer to *Xuthus*.—Come, *Ilyssus*,
We leave her to her Pollies. Look not on her,
She merits not thy Tendernefs. Away.
If Reason should again resume its Seat
We may expect her at the Banquet. Come,
All here must be our Guests.

[*Exeunt Xuthus, Ilyssus, &c.*

[*Creusa, Phorbas, and Lycea stay.*

Phor. Curb not thy Passion, give it Vent, great Queen,
And let it burst in Thunder on thy Foes.

Cre.

Cre. It shall, by Heaven it shall.—I thought till now
My Griefs were sacred, but this Monster dares
Insult ev'n Misery itself. ——— O *Pborbas*,
Forgive me if my Tears will force a Passage. ———
Now, they are gone, and I will weep no more.
Come, faithful Counsellor of Vengeance, come,
Instruct me how to act, steel all my Soul;
Let not Remorse or Pity's Coward Voice,
The Bane of noble Deeds, intrude to cross us.
Nicander's injur'd Ghost shall aid our Counsels.
Say, shall he die?

Pbor. Not yet, first be his Schemes
Abortive all, his politic Designs,
Then let him die despis'd.

Cre. Agreed; but how?

Pbor. Now at the Banquet may we crush at once
His full blown Hopes. The fatal Cause remov'd,
Th' Effect of Course must cease.

Cre. What Cause?

Pbo. The Boy.

I see thou shudder'st at it; but great Queen,
Hear but the cogent Reasons I shall offer
And thou wilt think as I do. For the Boy
Heaven knows I wish to spare him, but no Means
No earthly Means but this can curse compleatly
This politic Designer. Doubtless long
This fav'rite Scheme to place on *Athen's* Throne
His hated Race, has labour'd in his Breast,
And all his Hours employ'd. On this alone
He builds the firm Foundation of his Peace,
His Happiness to come. His Death were nothing,
He knows his Friends the Minions of his Fortune,
He knows all *Greece*, such is their Dread and Awe
Of *Delpi's* Shrine, will join in the Support
Of this deceitful Claim; and that firm Hope
Will make him triumph ev'n in Death, and laugh
At our too shallow Vengeance.

Cre. Laugh he shall not.

No, I will punish home.

Pbo. You cannot punish

By any Means but this. And know, great Queen,
I have a Poison of such subtle Force,

(Why dost thou start ?) of such amazing strength,
 Yet so peculiar in its Operation,
 That it shall seem the Surfeit of the Feast,
 Not we have done the Deed. At least shall seem so
 To all but *Xuthus*' self; for he methinks
 Should know the Truth, at least suspect it strongly,
 And yet not dare Revenge.

Cre. I cannot bear it;
 Howe'er we fail in our Revenge; my *Pborbas*,
 The Boy must live.

Pbor. Good Heav'n! is this *Crensa*?
 Is this the vengeful Queen who would not hear
 Remorse or Pity's Voice? Farewel then, *Athens*;
 Yes, my poor Country, thou must sink enslav'd
 To foreign Tyrants. She who should defend
 Thy Rights, thy Liberties, stands tamely by
 And sees the Yoke impos'd, nay smiles to see it:
 Thy Queen, the last of the illustrious Line,
 Consents to thy Destruction.

Cre. Never, *Pborbas*,
 Do what thou wilt. With this last parting Pang
 I give him to thy Rage. — Yet oh, beware
 I see him not again. One Look from him
 Would baffle all thy Schemes.

Pbo. Now at the Banquet
 Will we infuse the Draught ev'n in the Cup
 Which the King's self presents to his young Heir
 In Token of his Election.

Cre. Stay, good *Pborbas*.

Pbo. Already have I for the just Design
 Suborn'd a faithful Slave. Nay, should it fail,
 I have a trusty Band, a chosen few,
 Athenian Souls who scorn to bow the Knee
 To any foreign Lord; these will I place
 At the Pavillion Doors, if need require,
 To second our Attempt.

Cre. Yet stay, good *Pborbas*.
 How kindly did he seem to sympathize
 With my Distress! nay almost chid the King.
 When his loud Rage—

Pbor. He had been taught his Lesson.

'Twas

'Twas all Design, all Artifice to work
Upon a Woman's Weakness.

Cre. Think'st thou so?

Phor. I do. But, O my Queen, be more than
Woman,

Conquer this Foible of thy Sex.

Cre. Heav'n knows

How much it costs to do it—Go then, *Phorbas*,

I cannot bid thee prosper. [*Exit Phorbas.*]

O *Lycea*, thou know'st not what I feel—Haste, call
him back—

Not stay—I think the bitterness is past,

And I can bear it now. Lend me thy Arm,

I would retire, *Lycea*.—Yet from what

Should I retire? I cannot from myself!—

O Boy, thou art reveng'd; whate'er thou suffer'st

Is light, to what thy Murd'ers feels! [*Exit.*]

A C T IV. The Laurel Grove.

Phorbas and Athenians.

PHORBAS.

THIS Way, my Friends; at the Pavillion Doors
Stand ready arm'd, that if we need your Aid

You may observe the Sign, and crush at once

These vile Usurpers on the Rights of *Athens*.

I hope we want ye not.—I must be hid

A while, lest *Xanthus* should suspect my Presence.

The Queen too may repent, I'll therefore

shun her

Till the Deed's done, irrevocably done. } *Aside.*

—But stir not till I come.—What Noise is that?

Retire, my Friends, the Temple's Postern Door

Grates on its Hinge—Be secret and we prosper.

[*Exit severally.*]

Enter Aletes, and Pythia.

Ale. This Quarrel was unlucky. A slight Breach

Had lent my Purpose Strength ; but wrought thus
high

It may defeat our Hopes. She cannot now
With ease recede from her too rash Resolves,
At least not unsuspected. Did she, say'st thou,
Reject thy Message?

Pyth. Scarcely did she pay
The decent Dues my sacred Office claims,
And when I prest her more, with sullen Pride
She silently withdrew.

Ale. See her I must.
Where went she?

Pyth. To the Shades which over-hang
Th' Aonian Fount.

Ale. I will pursue her thither.

Pyth. It may not be, for now I know thy Secret
'Tis my Turn to be prudent, know'st thou not
Thou should'st be cautious, nor expose thyself
To prying Eyes ; I heard her, as she pass'd,
In broken Whispers bid *Lycea* haste
To *Phorbas* and inform that trusty Friend
That she would wait him in the Laurel Grove.
Here then thou may'st surprize them both, and
Crown

At once thy whole Design.

Ale. Thou counsel'st well,
And I will guide me by thy kind Advice.
O *Pythia*, how did every thing conspire
To give me Hopes that I should place the Boy
Secure on *Athens*' Throne, unknown to all
But those whom Fate had made his firmest Friends ;
The very Means I used to make it sure,
Have been most adverse to the Cause I labour'd :
Had I relied on *Xuthus*' Piety,
Nor mention'd *Aeolus*, Success were mine,
And let me hope it still. What most I fear
Is the Queen's Warmth of Passion. To which End
I must proceed with Tenderness, and hide
For some short Time *Ilyssus* from her Knowledge.
I have unnumber'd Cautions to premise
Which her o'erflowing Joy may haply ruin.
The Banquet, is it ready?

Pyth.

Pyth. It has long
In vain expected its illustrious Guests.
The King already has forgot his Rage,
And hopes returning Thought may move the Queen
To equal Amity: He therefore finds
Continual Causes to delay the Feast.

Ale. Retire. Perhaps 'tis she; I hear the Steps
Of some who move this Way. [*Exit Pythia.*
What means he here?

Why art thou absent from the Banquet, Youth?

Enter Ilyssus.

Ilyf. It has no Joys for me. I fear, *Aletes*,
Thou and thy *Pythia* have most foully play'd
For my Advancement.

Ale. Ha!

Ilyf. Where are the Parents
Whom thou didst promise to my Hopes? Alas
I find no Parents here, no kind Regards,
No inexpressive Fondness. Stern Debate,
And soul Dissention kindle here their Torch
To usher in my Greatness. Ev'n *Creusa*,
Whose Tendernefs I know not how alarm'd
My throbbing Heart with Hopes, and Doubts, and
Fears,

Unfelt before; ev'n she has taught her Eyes
To look with Strangeness on me. The good King,
Who yet withdraws not his Protection from me,
Seems lost in anxious Thought.—Unkind *Aletes*,
Art thou the Cause of this? Say, am I sprung
Of Race *Æolian*? For by Heaven I swear,
By that pure Fountain of immortal Truth,
I will not brook Deceit. I will again,
Howe'er the glittering Mischief tempt my Youth,
Become that humble unknown Thing I was,
Rather than wear a Crown by Falshood gain'd.
Speak then, and give me Ease.

Ale. My dearest Boy —
His Virtue charms me, tho' it may prevent
His own Success. O happy, happy *Athens*,
To gain a King like him, whose honest Soul
Starts at imagin'd Fraud!

Aside.

Ilyf.

Ilys. Speak on, *Aletes*,
And do not by that Look of Tenderness,
And murm'ring to thyself, alarm me more.

Ale. What should I speak; this very Morn, *Ilyssus*,
This very Morn I told thee a few Hours
Would shew thee what thou wert; but thy Impatience
Brooks not that short Delay. It seems *Aletes*
Has lost his usual Credit with *Ilyssus*,
Ev'n with the Youth his anxious Care has form'd.
Think'st thou the Man who taught thy feeling Heart
To start at Falshood; would himself commit
The Fraud thou shudder'st at? What have I done,
Which should induce thee to a Thought so base?
Did e'er my Precepts contradict my Heart?
Did I e'er teach a Virtue I not practis'd?
—I see thou art confounded. Know then, Youth,
I blame not thy Impatience, nay I praise
That Modesty which can so soon resume
Its Seat, when all Things round are big with Wonder.
Ere Night thou shalt know all; till then, *Ilyssus*,
Behave as *Athen's* King.

Ilys. O good *Aletes*,
Forgive my Rashness. Yes, I know thee honest
As Truth itself, and know the wond'rous Debt
I owe thy Goodness. Yet, if thou confess
That I have Reason for these anxious Cares,
Thou wilt permit me still to question thee.
Nay look upon me whilst I speak to thee.
Perhaps thou hast some secret Cause, *Aletes*,
For all that kind Attention thou hast shewn me,
From Infancy till now? why do'st thou turn
Thy Eyes to Earth? 'Tis plain thou hast a Cause:
Thou know'st from whom I sprung; how can'st thou
else

With Confidence assert, that yet ere Night
I shall know all?—Say this at least, *Aletes*,
Shall the Queen's Anger cease?

Ale. It shall, *Ilyssus*.

Ev'n now I wait her here; on what Design
I must not yet inform thee. The next Time
Thou shalt behold her, thou wilt find a Change

Incredible

Incredible indeed, from Rage to Fondness,
From cold Reserve to Tears of bursting Joy.

[*Ilyssus is going to speak eagerly.*]

—Ask me no more.—Yet something didst thou say
Relating to the Cause which fix'd me here
Thy Guardian, thy Instructor, and—the Time
Will come, when thou shalt know it all, *Ilyssus*,
And bless my Memory:

Ilyf. Thou weep'st, *Aletes*.
My Tears will mingle too.

Ale. Forbear, and leave me,
Yet stay a while, for now perhaps we part
To meet no more.

Ilyf. No more! Thou wilt not leave me
When most I want thy Care! 'Twas my first Thought,
'Twas the first Boon I ask'd of the good King,
That thou might'st be my kind Instructor still.
He prais'd my Gratitude, and I had promis'd
To bring him to my Cottage. He himself
Shall be a Suitor to thee.

Ale. Thou hast ask'd
Thou know'st not what: it cannot be, *Ilyssus*,
That *Xuthus* and *Aletes* e'er should meet
On Terms of Amity. The Smiles of Greatness,
To me have lost their Value. For thy Love
I could do much, and to be sever'd from thee
Pulls at my Heart-strings. But resistless Fate
Has fix'd its Seal, and we must part for ever,
How hard soe'er it seem. Thy Youth will soon,
Amidst the busy Scenes of active Greatness,
Forget its Monitor: But I must bear
In hopeless Solitude the Pangs of Absence
Till Thoughts shall be no more.

Ilyf. O heav'nly Powers!
Then there is something dreadful yet conceal'd.
I cannot part from thee in Ignorance.
Tell me, *Aletes*.

Ale. Would I could! But now
It must not be.—Haste to the Banquet, Youth,
Thy Duty calls thee thither.

Ilyf. Go I cannot,
Till thou assur'st me we shall meet again.

Ale.

Alc. If possible we will. If not, remember,
When thou shalt know thyself, that on thyself
Thy Fate depends; that Virtue, Glory, Happiness,
Are close connected, and their sad Reverse
Is Vice, is Pain, is Infamy. — Alas!
These were the Lessons of thy private Life,
This I have told thee oft, but my fond Tongue
Runs o'er its former Precepts, and forgets
Thou now must mount a Throne; a larger Scene
Of Duty opens.

Ilyf. Yet the tender Friend,
Who should direct me, leaves me to myself.
Canst thou abandon me?

Alc. Would Fate permit
I would attend thee still. But oh, *Ilyffus*,
Whate'er becomes of me, when thou shalt reach
That envied Pinacle of earthly Greatness,
Where faithful Monitors but rarely follow,
Ev'n there, amidst the kindest Smiles of Fortune,
Forget not thou wert once distress'd and Friendless.
Be strictly Just; but yet, like Heaven, with Mercy
Temper thy Justice. From thy purged Ear
Banish base Flattery, and spurn the Wretch
Who would persuade thee thou art more than Man;
Weak, erring, selfish Man, endued with Power
To be the Minister of public Good.
If Conquest charm thee, and the Pride of War
Blaze on thy Sight, remember thou art placed
The Guardian of Mankind, nor build thy Fame
On Rapines, and on Murders. Should soft Peace
Invite to Luxury, the pleasing Bane
Of happy Kingdoms, know from thy Example
The Bliss or Woe of nameless Millions Springs,
Their Virtue, or their Vice. Nor think by Laws
To curb licentious Man; those Laws alone
Can bend the headstrong Many to their Yoke,
Which make it present Int'rest to obey them.
O Boy!

Enter Pythia hastily.

Pyth. *Ilyffus*! Wherefore art thou here?
The King expects thee, and the Banquet waits.

Ilyf. I cannot go.

Alc.

Alc. Thou must ; thy Fate depends
Upon thy Absence now. The Queen approaches.
After the Banquet I again will see thee,
And thou shalt know the Whole. I will by Heaven.

[*Exit Ilyffus.*]

Pythia away, and wait me in the Temple.

[*Exit Pythia.*]

She saw them not ; on her contracted Brow
Sits brooding Care. She speaks ! My Heart beats
thick,

And my Tongue trembles to perform its Office.

Now Fate attend, and perfect thine own Work !

Enter Creusa.

Cre. To what have I consented !—Hail ! who art
thou

That thus intrud'st on sacred Privacy,
When the o'erburthen'd Mind unloads its Griefs,
Its hoarded Miseries.

Alc. Thy better Genius !

Cre. That Voice is sure familiar to my Ear !
Who art thou, speak.

Alc. One whom Adversity
Has taught to know himself. I bring thee Tidings
Of an unhappy Man who wrong'd thee much,
But much repented of the Wrongs he did thee ;
Of thy *Nicander*, Queen.

Cre. *Nicander*, say'st thou ?
O then thou art indeed my better Genius.

Alc. Now, arm thy Soul for Wonders yet to come !
Perhaps he lives.

Cre. He lives ? [*Looking on him with Amazement.*]

Alc. [*After great Irrresolution and Struggles with
himself.*]

Behold him here !

[*She faints.*]

—What has my Rashness done ?—The Blush of Life
Has left her Cheek, the Pulse forgets to move.

Where shall I turn ? I cannot call for Aid,

Nor can I leave her thus.—She breathes, she stirs !

—Yes, yes, *Creusa*, thy *Nicander* lives,

And he will catch at least this dear Embrace

Tho' now thou art another's.

Cre.

Cre. Gracious Gods?

It is, it is *Nicander*, 'tis my Lord!

O I am only thine, no Power on Earth
Shall e'er divide us more.

—It cannot be, my Senses all deceive me—

And yet it is.—O let me gaze upon thee,
Recall each Trace which marks thee for my own,
And gives me back the Image of my Heart.

How Time and Grief have chang'd thee! But my
Love

Can know no Change. My Lord, my Life, my Husband!

Where hast thou wander'd? How hast thou been hid
From Love's all-piercing Sight? The bloody Ruffians,
How didst thou 'scape their Rage? or did they wreak
Upon the helpless Innocent alone
Their impious Vengeance?

Nic. Nor on me, nor him
Did Vengeance fall.

Cre. Does he too live?

Nic. He does.

Cre. O honest *Phorbas*! Murder now is Virtue.

[*Afide.*

Nic. The fabled Murder was all Stratagem
Contriv'd for thy dear Sake; no impious Ruffians
Pursued our Steps: I found that I had wrong'd thee
Beyond Redress, nor knew another Means
But by my Death to save thee from Dishonour.
Despair I thought might conquer Love, and thou
Once more be *Athens*' Pride. The precious Charge
Forbad a real Death, I therefore stain'd
With Blood my well-known Garments, which produced —

Cre. A curs'd Effect.—But I have nearer Fears.
How cam'st thou hither? wherefore to these Shades?
The Boy, where is he?

Nic. Far from hence.—

Cre. Thank Heaven!

Nic. He lives in Peace and Safety.—What disturbs thee?

Cre. Nothing—I dare not tell him what I feared,
His honest Breast might shudder at the Guilt,

Tho'

Tho' now it be more needful.—The dear Boy,
Say, is he brave?

Nic. As Woman could desire.

Cre. And form'd like thee?

Nic. His Person far exceeds

What my most vig'rous Youth could boast, *Creusa,*

And his firm Mind is Wisdom's aged Strength

With all Youth's Graces soften'd.

Cre. 'Tis too much.

O happy Mother! Call'st thou him *Nicander*?

Nic. No, *Ion*, 'twas the Name the Matron chose,

Who gave him to my Care.

Cre. Then *Ion* be it.

Ion shall reign in *Athens*. Know'st thou, Love,

The curs'd Design which this *Eolian* here,

And the vile Maid ———

Nic. The Priestess, it should seem,

With *Xuthus* has conspir'd to fix his Race

On *Athens* Throne.

Cre. But never shall his Race

That Scepter wield.

Nic. It never shall, *Creusa*.

I have a Means ———

Cre. My Means, thank Heaven is surer. [*Aside.*]

Nic. But I will tell thee all from first to last,

Hear then and weigh my Words, for Fate is in them.

Xuthus, th' *Athenian* King ———

Cre. I think not of him.

Nic. Beware of that. Whate'er thou think'st,

Creusa,

Xuthus must still reign on, thy Lord and Husband.

Cre. *Xuthus* my Lord! then what art thou, *Nicander*?

Do'st thou despise me for a Crime thyself

Hast forc'd me to commit? My Soul was thine

Ev'n when I gave my Hand, and still remains

Untainted, undefil'd.

Nic. I know it well,

Thou dearest, best of Women.—My torn Heart

Drops Blood while I propose it, yet we must,

We must for ever part.—Forbear, *Creusa*,

That killing Look strikes thro' me.—Think, O think,
 What in this Age of Absence I have born,
 How combated each tender Thought, and liv'd
 For thy dear Sake a Victim to Despair.
 But now if thou consent'st, all, all is mine,
 And I forgive my Fate.—The dear, dear Boy,
 I have a Means to place him on the Throne
 Secure as we could wish.

Cre. Secure he shall be,
 I will proclaim him to the World as mine,
 And *Athens* shall with Joy receive its Sov'reign;
 The Tyrant *Xuthus* shall be taught to fear
 A Master's Frown.

Nic. Thy Rashness, my *Creusa*,
 May ruin all.

Cre. I will be rash, if this
 Be Rashness, to declare to Earth, to Heav'n,
 A Mother's Heart-felt Joy, whose only Child
 Snatch'd from the Grave unhop'd for comes to claim,
 With every Grace and every Virtue crown'd,
 Th' Imperial States of his great Ancestors,
 And shall we want a Means?

Nic. We need not wait;
 For by my Care th' important Means is found
 Already, and no human Power but thine
 Can hinder our Success. I would have hid
 The Secret from thee till thy wish'd Consent
 Had giv'n my Purpose Strength, but thou defeat'st
 My utmost Caution, and will force me tell thee,
Ilyssus is young *Ion*!—Ha! *Creusa*!
 Thou art not mad! Good Heaven! how her Eye
 fixes!

What have I done? what said, which could attack
 The Seats of Sense with this amazing Force?
 My Wife, my Queen, O speak?—

Cre. Off, touch me not,
 Thou can'st not bring Relief.—O I am curs'd
 Beyond all Power of Aid. Thou too art curs'd
 And know'st it not.—He dies, he dies, *Nicander*?

Nic. Amazement! who?

Cre.

Cre. O had he not been mine,
His Youth, his Softness, each attracting Grace——
I should have staid whole Ages ere in Thought
I had consented to so damn'd a Deed.
Tears, Tears, why burst ye not?—But what have I
To do with Tears? those are for tender Mothers.
The Tigress weeps not o'er her mangled Prey.—
He dies, he dies, *Nicander.*

Nic. Who? *Ibysus?*
Speak, speak, *Creusa.*

Cre. *Phorbas* urg'd the Deed,
And I consented; at the Feast he dies
By Poison.—O my Soul!

Nic. Fly then, this Instant
Perhaps thou may'st prevent it, as thou can'st
He parted hence.—I knew not to his Death!

Cre. I go, I fly.

Nic. Yet stay, thy Rashness there,
If Fate has sav'd him, may undo us yet.
—The *Pythia*! true, the *Pythia* shall rush in
To stop the fatal Banquet, and declare
The Feast unhallow'd; at this lucky Moment
She waits me in the Temple.—Stay, *Creusa.*

[Exit *Nicander.*

Cre. The *Pythia*, no; I will myself outstrip
The Lightning's Speed. Whatever be th' Event,
'Tis not too late to die. [Exit.

A C T. V. The Laurel Grove.

Phorbas and *Lycea.*

LYCEA.

O Earth! O Heaven! O wretched, wretched
Athens!

Phor. Speak on, *Lycea*; wherefore art thou silent?
Why do'st thou lead me to this secret Shade?
What mean thy flowing Tears?

Lyc. The Queen, the Queen!

E 2

Phor.

Pbor. Say, what of her?

Lyc. I know not, all to me
Is Terror and Confusion.

Pbor. What thou know'st
Relate.

Lyc. She sent me forth to seek thee, *Phorbas*;
I found thee not, but met at my Return
Creusa's self. Despair was in her Eyes,
With hasty steps she shot impatient by me,
Nor listen'd when I spake. I follow'd wond'ring,
And enter'd the Pavilion.

Pbor. The Pavilion?
Why, went she to the Banquet?

Lyc. Eager went,
Despair and Anguish mixing on her Look;
But O good Heav'n how chang'd was that Despair
To inexpressive Joy, when from the Croud
She learnt *Ilyssus* had delay'd the Feast,
And won the King once more to ask her Presence,
"Where is he? let me clasp him to my Breast,"
She cried; "I now no longer will resist
"Heaven's high Command." Imperial *Xuthus* rose
With Transports to receive her, and loud Shouts
Proclaim'd the People's Joy. When Death to Sight!
Eternal Pain to Memory! the Slave
Presents the Goblets; fill, she cried a third,
I too will hail *Ilyssus* King of *Athens*.
But first all swear, swear by immortal *Jove*,
By the far-darting God who here presides,
And the chaste Guardian of our native Fanes,
Swear here, swear all, and binding be the Oath,
Ilyssus only shall be *Athens*' King.

Pbor. What could she mean?

Lyc. Attentive *Xuthus* caught
With Joy the happy Omen, and all swore
Ilyssus only should be *Athens*' King:
This done, I saw her from *Ilyssus* Hand
Snatch the dire Goblet, and to him resign
Her own untouch'd. The slave who mix'd the
Draught

Turn'd pale and trembled, I with eager Zeal

Pres'd

Press'd forward, but in vain; she firmly grasp'd
The Bowl, and smiling drank it to the Dregs.

Phor. The Poison, ha?—I knew her foolish Fondness
Would start at Murder's Name. But wherefore die?
Why turn'd upon herself her impious Rage?
'Twas Madness all; or else some new Contrivance,
Some fresh *Æolian* Fraud—I care not what.
I yet will blast their Schemes.—Yes, let her die,
By her own Folly perish. *Athens* still
Survives, and shall survive—I must be sudden.
She doubtless will betray me to the King,
And cut off ev'n this last Resource. *Lycea*,
Be secret, and thy Country shall be free.

Lyc. Were it not better, *Phorbas*, first to see her.
Perhaps some Secret unreveal'd may lurk
Beneath this Show of unexampled Rashness.
She left the Banquet soon, and with the *Pythia*
Enter'd the Temple.

Phor. With the *Pythia*, say'st thou?
Then there is Mischief toward.

Lyc. Yet now alone
We may surprize her, for I saw the Maid
Quick from the Fane return with hasty Steps
As if dispatch'd on some important Message,
Perhaps to find thee out. Sure thou should'st see her.

Phor. And perish, ha?—No, no, my sacred Country,
Too much already have I been deceiv'd;
I will not leave thee in a Woman's Power.
—Yet hold, *Lycea* may inform her of them
And my Designs prove yet abortive. Maid,
Thy presence may be needful.

Lyc. Mine? Good Heaven,
In what? *Crensa* will require my Aid;
At least my Tears are due to my poor Queen
In her last Moments.

Phor. Stay, she wants them not;
I know the Poison's Force too well, *Lycea*,
To fear a Death so sudden. This Way, Maid,
Nay, thou must go; I shall have Business for thee,

Some secret Message to the Queen, *Lyssa*,
Which thou alone can'st bear.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Pythia and Nicander.

Pyth. 'Twas he, I saw him and *Lyssa* with him.
Sure he should be inform'd?—Thou hear'st me not.

Nic. This Action of the Queen sits near my Heart.

Pyth. She bade me tell thee——But why waste we
Time,

Thou now may'st enter at the Postern Gate
Unseen by all.

Nic. Why did'st thou not rush in, and stop the Feast?
Thy speedy Presence there had sav'd us all.

Pyth. What could I do? the Queen was there al-
ready

And all seem'd Peace and Joy; could I suspect
That Poison lurk'd beneath so fair a seeming?

Nic. She breaks thro' my Designs.——Unhappy
Woman!

My Soul bleeds for her, and Confusion hangs
On every rising Thought.—The dear, dear Boy!—
Where is he, at the Banquet still?

Pyth. He is.

Nic. And where *Crensa*?

Pyth. I already told thee,
But thou regard'st not, in the Temple's Gloom
Retir'd she sits, expecting thy Approach.
We there may settle all.

Nic. I fear her much.

Thou see'st her Passions are too near concern'd
To be of use to us; thy cooler Sense
Must here direct us. Does the Poison's Power
Affect her yet.

Pyth. Not yet; I would have tried
Some powerful Antidote to quell its Force
But she refuses Life and only begs
To see her Son and thee.

Nic. I will attend

Upon the Infant. But first hear me, *Pythia*;
Thou seest on what a Precipice we stand,
It were in vain to hope we could conceal

The

The Truth from *Xuthus*, from the rest we may ;
'Tis thy Task therefore—

Pyth. What ? to own the Fraud,
And publish to the King that *Delphi's* Shrine
Is not oracular, Ha !

Nic. To the King,
'Twere better sure to publish the Deceit
Than to the World ; and where's the Means but this
To hide it ? By *Creusa's* art thou say'st
He is already bound in solemn Oaths
To leave *Ilyssus* Heir to *Athen's* Throne.
Can'st thou not add still stronger Oaths, or ere
Thou dost reveal the Secret of our Fate ?
Then who shall dare to break them ? Shall the King ?
Thou know'st his scrup'ulous Piety extends
Almost to Weakness. What should tempt him to it ?
Creusa dead can frame no Schemes against him ;
The boy to him alone must owe his Greatness ;
And for *Nicander* never more shall *Greeks*
Hear his forgotten Name.

Pyth. It must be so ;
And yet—

Nic. What yet ? to *Phorbas* thou with ease
May'st own the Truth ; he will not start at Fraud
In sacred Things.—But see the Queen approaches
Impatient of our Stay. She changes not
The Bloom of Health is still upon her Cheek !
Fain would I hope—But Hopes, alas, are vain.—
What hast thou done, *Creusa* ?

Creusa entering.

Cre. Sav'd *Ilyssus* !

Nic. Thou might'st have liv'd with Honour.

Cre. Liv'd ! good Heaven !

I start, I tremble at the Thoughts of Life.
Can'st thou reflect on what I had design'd,
On what I am, on what, alas, I have been,
And not perceive Death was my only Refuge ?
—Am I not *Xuthus's* Wife, and what art thou ?
O had'st thou seen the Torments of my Soul,
When in one hasty Moment it ran o'er
The Business of an Age, weigh'd all Events,

Saw

Saw *Xuthus*, Thee, *Ilyssus*, *Athens* bleed
In one promiscuous Carnage!—Light at length
Burst thro' the Gloom, and Heaven's own Voice pro-
claim'd

One victim might suffice——

For *Xuthus* Honour strove, and mightier Love
Assum'd *Nicander*'s Cause. Who then could fall?
Could *Xuthus*? could *Nicander*?—no; *Creusa*.

Nic. Would thou had'st been less kind!—But, O my
Queen,

To blame thee now were vain.——

Cre. To blame? 'tis Praise,

'Tis Triumph I demand. He lives! he reigns!
Young *Ion* lives! young *Ion* reigns in *Athens*!
O bring him, *Pythia*, bring him to my Arms;
Let me but pour a last sad Blessing o'er him,
And Death has lost its Terrors.

How now, *Lycea*?

Enter Lycea hastily.

Lyc. Mighty Queen, I know not
If thy Command would authorize th' Attempt,
But *Pborbas* with an arm'd *Athenian* Band
Now enters the Pavilion to destroy
The King and young *Ilyssus*.

Nic. Earth and Heaven!
What say'st thou, Maid?

Cre. O let me fly to save him,
Here shall their Poinards——

Nic. Rest thou there, *Creusa*,
Thy Embassies to-day have prov'd too fatal.
My Life for his I save him from the Stroke,
And on the Instant send him to thy Arms.
Now, Fate, be doubly mine!

[Exit.]

Cre. Off, let me go, I will not be restrain'd.
They tear him piece-meal!

Pyth. Patience, mighty Queen!
What Man can do, *Nicander* will perform.

Cre. He is a Father only to my Child,
He cannot tell them what a mother feels.
—*Pborbas* was born the Curse of me and mine.
I might have known to what his impious Rage

Would

Would urge him on, and should have first inform'd him.

—Gods! must I never know sweet Peace again,
Not even in Death have Rest!

Pyth. Behold he comes
To bless thee ere thou die'st, and cease to murmur
At Heaven's high Will.

Enter Ilyssus.

Cre. It is, it is *Ilyssus*—
My Son, my Son!

Ilyf. Good Heavens! and do I live
To see a Parent melt in Fondness o'er me!
—*Aletes* saved me from the Soldiers Arms,
And bade me fly to find a Mother here.
Art thou indeed that Mother, mighty Queen!
And may I call thee so? thou art, thy Looks,
Thy Tears, thy kind Embrace, all, all proclaim
The Truth.—O let me thus, thus on my Knees.—

Cre. Rise, rise, my Child; I am, I am thy Mother.

Ilyf. O sacred Sound, *Ilyssus* is no more
That outcast Youth. A Mother, and a Queen
He finds at once.

Cre. But art thou safe, my Child?
Hast thou no Wound?

Ilyf. The old grey-headed Man,
Who brought this Morn the News of thy Arrival,
Had rais'd against my Breast his eager Sword,
Defenceless I, when good *Aletes* came
And snatch'd me from the Stroke. I would have staid,
Unarm'd with him have staid, but his Command
Was absolute, that I should fly to find,
What I have found, a Mother! [*Embracing her.*]

Yet, O Queen,
Why am I thus encompass'd round with Wonder!
May I not know this Riddle of my Fate?
Why first condemn'd to pass my Infant Days
In this obscure Retreat? If I am thine,
Thy Son, illustrious Queen, sure I was born
To Thrones, and Empires?

Cre. Thou art born to Thrones,
And shalt in *Athens* reign.

Ilyf.

Ilyf. As *Xutbus'* Heir.

Is *Xutbus* then my Sire? Forgive me, Queen,
I have a thousand, and a thousand Doubts.

Can *Xutbus* be my Sire?

Pyib. Forbear, *Ilyffus*,

Nor press thy Fate too far. When Time permits
Thou shalt know all.

Cre. Shalt know it now, *Ilyffus*.

Not *Xutbus* is thy Sire, but that brave Man
Who but this Instant snatch'd thee from thy Fate,
And by that Act proclaim'd himself a Father.

Ilyf. *Aletes*?

Cre. Not *Aletes*, but *Nicander*,

My wedded Lord, thy Sire!—And see, he comes
To bleis thee, and confirm the sacred Truth.

—Good Heaven, he bleeds!

Enter Nicander.

Nic. To Death, to Death, *Creusa*.

Amid the Fray I met the Fate I sought for.

All else is safe, and *Xutbus* now pursues

A scatter'd Few, who fall beneath his Sword.

—Where is my Boy?—Ye Guards of Innocence!

How has he been beset, and how escap'd!

—Where is my Boy, for I may own him now,

And clasp him to my Breast, no more *Aletes*,

The sage Instructor of a Youth unknown,

But the dear Father weeping o'er his Child.

Ilyf. O Sir, what Gratitude before inspir'd
Let Duty pay.

Nic. I have no Time to waste

In Fondness now. Hear my last Words, *Ilyffus*,

And bind them to thy Heart. Thou still must live

The Son of *Xutbus*. The good *Pyibia* here

Will tell thee all the Story of thy Fate:

And may'st thou prosper as thou do'st obey

Her sacred Counsel. *Xutbus* too must know

The fatal Tale; but to the World beside

It must be hid in Darkness.

Pyib. *Pborbas* sure,

Should be inform'd.

Nic. *Pborbas* has breath'd his last;

And

And the brib'd Slave who mix'd the poisonous
Draught

Fell by his Hand.—*Ilyssus*, O farewell.

I will not bid adieu to thee, *Creusa*,

Thy Colour changes, and the Lamp of Life
Fades in thy Eye; we soon shall meet again.—

Ilyssus, Oh! —

Ilyf. How hard he grasps my Hand!

My Lord, my Father! Have I learn'd so late,
To call thee by that Name, and must I lose,
For ever lose?—Good Heaven, she grasps me too!
What means it, *Pythia*? The cold Damps of Death
Are on her.

Cre. O my Child, enquire no farther;
'Tis fitting we should part. *Lycea*, *Pythia*,
Intreat of *Xuthus*—yet I need not fear
His Goodness, tho' I wrong'd him, foully wrong'd
him,

He yet will prove a Father to my Child,
And from the World conceal the fatal Truth.
O, I am cold—what Bolts of Ice shoot thro' me!
How my Limbs shiver!—Nearer yet, my Child,
My Sight grows dim, and I could wish to gaze
For ever on thee.—Oh it will not be—

Ev'n thou art lost, *Ilyssus*.—Oh—Farewel. [*Dies.*]

Ilyf. She dies, she dies. Was I then only mock'd
With a vain Dream of Bliss to be plung'd back
In deeper Misery? Did I but hear
The tender Name of Child breath'd fondly o'er me
To make me feel what 'tis to lose that Name?
O I am ten times more an Orphan now,
Than when I knew no Parents.

Enter Xuthus, &c.

Xut. Where is this Murd'ress, who with wild Deceit
Seem'd to consent to ours, and Heaven's Designs,
Only to make us a more easy Prey
To her Assassins?—Ha, *Creusa* dead?
And the brave Stranger who preserv'd us all?
Is he too dead?—The Boy—

Pyth. *Ilyssus* lives,
And thou hast sworn, great King, that he shall reign
Supreme

52 C R E U S A, &c.

Supreme in *Athens*. Say, do'st thou confirm
That Oath?

Xuth. I do by Heaven!

Pyth. Ask here no more.

The fatal Tale is for thy private Ear
Retire and learn it all. For poor *Creusa*,
She wrong'd not thee, upon herself alone
She drew Heaven's Vengeance. And too surely
proves

That murder but intentional not wrought
To horrid Act before th' eternal Throne
Stands forth the first of Crimes. Who dare assume,
Unwarranted, Heaven's high Prerogative
O'er Life and Death, with double Force shall find
Turn'd on themselves the Mischiefs they design'd.

F I N I S.

